

Attorney Docket No.: FMCE-P145

Remarks

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Applicants have received and reviewed the Advisory Action dated December 12, 2008. The present Amendment is intended to address the Examiner's assertions regarding the teachings of the prior art references, as set forth in the Final Office Action and clarified in the Advisory Action. Applicants have accordingly made several amendments to independent claims 1, 16 and 19 in a good faith effort to distinguish their invention from what the Examiner asserts these prior art references disclose.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8-13 and 20-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over AAPA in view of Sitte and Adamson et al. Independent claim 1, on which the remaining claims depend, has been amended to more clearly distinguish applicants' invention from these references.

In particular, claim 1 has been amended to require: (1) that the common bus include a number of cable units, including a last cable unit which is located at the distal end of the common bus; (2) that the end termination be connected to the distal end of the last cable unit; and (3) that the end termination comprise a termination hub for electrically terminating the common bus.

These limitations are not disclosed in either AAPA, Sitte or Adamson. Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, Sitte does not disclose an end termination of the type recited in amended claim 1. The "termination connector" which Sitte discloses at column 16, lines 1-4 is simply a common cable connector which

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serves to connect two cables together. Moreover, Sitte does not disclose that this "termination connector" includes a termination hub for electrically terminating the common bus.

Therefore, claim 1 is clearly patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over any permissible combination of AAPA, Sitte and Adamson. Furthermore, since claims 3, 4, 8-13 and 20-22 depend from claim 1, these claims are also patentable over an permissible combination of AAPA, Sitte and Adamson for the reasons stated above.

Claims 16, 17 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over AAPA in view of Sitte and Longsdorf et al. Claims 16 and 19 have been amended to more clearly distinguish applicants' invention from these references.

In particular, claims 16 and 19 have been amended to clarify that the cable unit forming part of the common bus is similar to the harness unit 92 shown in Figure 4 of the present application. As amended, claims 16 and 19 now require that the cable unit comprise: (1) a junction; and (2) a plurality of branch cables. These claims also require that each branch cable include: (3) a first end which is connected to the junction; (4) a second end which is connected to a corresponding electrical connector that in turn is removably connectable to one of the devices; and (5) at least two control signal supply cables which extend between the first and second ends and are connected to the junction and the electrical connector.

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Neither AAPA, Sitte nor Longsdorf discloses a cable unit of this configuration. Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, Sitte does not disclose a junction of the type recited in claims 16 and 19. In this regard, although the Examiner asserts that elements 220, 230, 710 and 712 define a junction, this "junction" does not form part of a cable unit. Rather, elements 220, 230, 710 and 712 are part of a smart sensor 700 which is enclosed by a housing represented by the dashed lines in Figure 11 (column 15, lines 20-22).

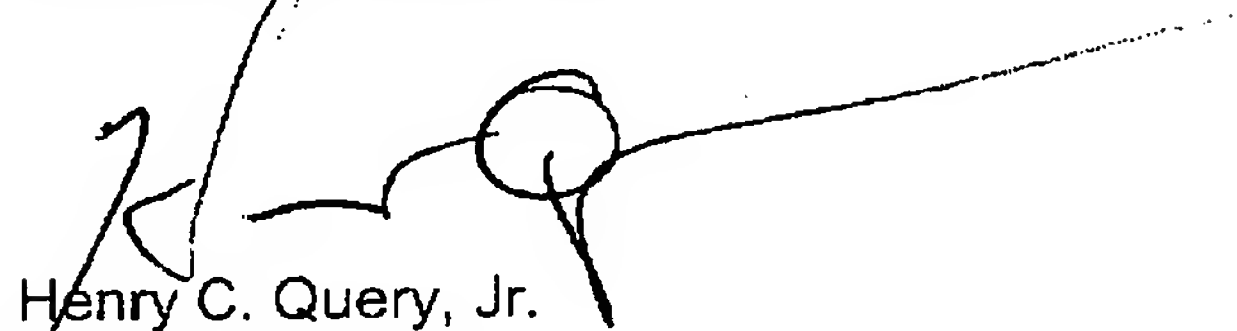
Also, even assuming *arguendo* that elements 220, 230, 710 and 712 are a junction, this "junction" is not connected to a branch cable having a second end which is connected to an electrical connector that in turn is removably connectable to a device. In anticipation of the Examiner's argument that the wires shown connecting the elements 220 and 230 to the sensors 702 and 720 are "branch cables", applicants note that these wires appear to be hard-wired to the sensors 702 and 720. Moreover, these wires clearly are not connected to corresponding electrical connectors which in turn are removably connectable to the sensors 702, 720.

Therefore, claims 16 and 19 are clearly patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over any permissible combination of AAPA, Sitte and Longsdorf. Furthermore, since claim 17 depends from claim 16, this claim is patentable over any permissible combination of AAPA, Sitte and Longsdorf for the reasons stated above.

For the foregoing reasons, claims 1, 3, 4, 8-13, 16, 17 and 19-22 are submitted as allowable. Favorable action is solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Query, Jr.", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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